

CHURCH-POWER, *by our Constitution, seized
wholly in the Civil Magistrate, and not at all
in the Convocation.*

THE
DISSENTING GENTLEMAN'S
POSTSCRIPT

To his three LETTERS to Mr. WHITE;

CONTAINING

REMARKS on his APPENDIX

In which also are further consider'd,

The Sacramental Test; The Affair of Mr. *Whiston's* Censure; The Consecration of Churches.

Thou art not Cæsar's Friend. JOHN XIX. 12.

*The Weapons of our Warfare are mighty through GOD, to
the pulling down strong Holds, casting down Imaginations.*
2 COR. X. 4, 5.



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T H E
Dissenting Gentleman's
 POSTSCRIPT, &c.

S I R,

TH E extraordinary Remark which introduces your *Appendix* — That Views of *worldly Interest* incourage and support our *Dissent* from the Establishment — I shall leave to the universal Laugh of your Readers, for a Confutation; and pass on to Points of greater Moment in Debate. — To begin with your *first*. Of CHURCH-POWER, *and in whom lodged*.

The Church of *E*——d claims, in her *Articles* and *Canons* * from GOD, to decree OTHER Ceremonies and Rites of Worship, and to make OTHER Terms of *Christian Communion* than either *Christ* or his *Apostles* ever made or decreed; and to have Authority in *Controversies of Faith*.

This high and important *Power* she sovereignly exerts: You, as her zealous Advocate, endeavour to support her in it; and charge all the *Dissenters* as guilty of a very crying and dangerous *Sin*, in not submitting thereto. The *Dissenters*, I have told you, will readily own the Charge, and return immediately to your Church, if you will gratify them in these two most reasonable Requests. 1st, Tell them plainly, who,

* Art. xx. and Can. xxvii, xxix, xxx.

and WHAT *it is*, you mean by *the CHURCH*? And, 2. Prove it, to have *this Power* vested in it by GOD.

Your Advocates for *Church-Power*, I know, love always to deal in *Generals*; and will twist a thousand Ways, rather than *explain* their Scheme, and be forced to *speak out*: But you, Sir, being a Gentleman of singular Intrepidity; and affecting to do Things in, what you call, a *Soldierly Manner*, when your late *Appendix* came forth, protesting to treat expressly of *Church-Power*, and in whom lodg'd; I hoped to see the Point, all Disguises apart, openly and frankly handled; and that a certain Judgment might now be formed what your Sentiments were. But, alas, vain were these Hopes! Not all the Invitations and Provocations I have used, can draw you from the Darkness where you artfully lurk. Tho' the Regard you owe to *Truth*, to *Justice*, to the *Souls* of your *Dissenting Brethren*, and to your own *Reputation*, most strongly obliged you to it; yet you have not, durst not honestly and fairly tell us — who *the Persons* are whom GOD hath trusted with this Power; nor have produced the least Shadow of a *Charter* from Heaven, investing them with it.

In most manifest Contradiction, indeed, to our *Constitution*; our *Laws*; our *Articles* and *Canons*, to which you have solemnly sworn and subscribed; and even to your very SELF (as I shall presently shew) you continue to affirm — “ That this Power is NOT AT ALL in the *Civil Magistrate*; that he hath declared and recognised it *not* to be in himself; but is solely in the *Pastors* and *Governors* of the Church.” — But when I once and again press and provoke you to say, who these *Governors* and *Pastors* are — Are they the *Archbishops*; or the *Bishops*; or the *Deans* and *Chapters* of every Diocese; or the *Priest* in every Parish; or the Clergy met in *Convocation*? — You are sour, and will not answer. No, if *Dissenters* must have these knotty Points solved, let them seek it from other Hands. —

But

But what Idea, Sir, will *the Public* form of a *Scholar*, a *Divine*, a some-time *Fellow* of a learned *College*, arraigning us before its Bar, as guilty of *high Crimes* in not submitting to *Church-Power*; writing Tract upon Tract to persuade and seduce us to it; coming forth with an *Appendix* professing to treat expressly of *Church-Power* and in whom lodg'd; and yet, with all this Parade, not capable of being induced to say——WHO *it is* he means by these *Pastors* and *Governors*, to whom, under Peril of everlasting Damnation, we are bound to submit.

I observe, you rank your self with *the Learned*, and claim *Precedence* amongst them. —— “ *I, and another learned Gentleman ** ” (*Ego, & Rex meus*) But will not the *Learned* disclaim you; and treat your Lucubrations as an egregious Impertinence; who can thus double and evade, and meanly refuse to speak to the one single Point, on which they all see the whole Controversy turns? Must not all your pretended Charity; and Lamentation over our *straying Souls*, appear to an high Degree ridiculous, and perfect Grimace? *Dissenters* dangerously sin, in rejecting a *Power* ordained by *Almighty GOD*: They profess themselves ready to yield it Submission, if shewn where it is: Mr. *White*, their pretended Friend, knows the grand Secret; but no Prayers can wrest it from him; he is close and demure; and leaves them to wonder on, and sin, and perish in the Dark.

But to examine your romantic Scheme, as far as Conjecture can pick it out.——The Church's *Pastors* and *Governors* are ALONE possess'd, you say, of this *Power*. By its *Governors*, 'tis presumed, you mean its *Bishops*; and by *Pastors*, its *Priests*. Every Parish *Priest* then, (your good SELF, Sir, amongst the rest) and every *Bishop* of this Land, is vested with this *high Power*: viz. a Power of *Decreeing* OTHER *Rites* and *Ceremonies* in Divine Worship, and of *Injoining* OTHER *Terms of Christian Communion*, than either *CHRIST* or his *Apostles* decreed or injoin'd; and of *Pronouncing*

* Appendix. Page 37.

AUTHORITATIVELY in *Controversies of Faith*. This you will note carefully, is the *Power* in Dispute betwixt us. This the *Power* which your Church exerts: This the *Power* you claim for her; and which you affirm is vested *solely*, (if I understand your Scheme) in its Bishops and Priests.

But, pray, give me Leave to ask——How do they possess it! *separately* or *conjunctly*? It must be one of these. Has *every Priest* within his Parish; and *every Bishop* within his Diocese, a *Right* to exercise this Power, *separately* and *apart* from others? Or, must they assemble in common *Council*, and by joint *Suffrage* and *Consent* issue forth their Determinations; to which the Consciences of all the Faithful are bound to submit? Not *separately* and *apart*, 'tis presumed you will say, but in *Convocation* convened.

Accordingly, you lay, I observe, a mighty Stress upon the CONVOCATION'S *Consent* to the Act of Uniformity, and the present establish'd Forms; and seem to represent *this* as that which alone gave *Authority* to both; and that as long as this *Consent* of the *Convocation* was withheld (as for a considerable Time it was) so long the Reformation “ was a Measure not quite canonical nor ecclesiastically right —— That it was a going “ a little awry into some *illegal* or *extra-legal* Ways —— “ That the King's Supremacy, on that Occasion, was “ raised to an *undue Height*, and such as *ought not* to be “ drawn into Example at other Times —— That most, “ if not all, the Reviews and Alterations which have “ been since made, have been made by the *Bishops* “ and *Clergy*; in, or by the Authority, or with the “ Concurrence of the *Convocation* (your great Mistake, “ here, you will presently see) and if our Governors “ shall at any Time think fit to subject it, to any other “ Alterations or Reviews, you will not suffer yourself “ to doubt, but they will be made by *ecclesiastical* and “ even *synodal* Authority, before the *civil Sanction* be “ added to them *.”

The Authority of the *Convocation* is, I see, the *Phantom* that haunts your Mind, and has *distorted* strangely

your Thoughts, on this Subject of *Church-Power*. I will candidly endeavour your Illumination on this Point; as I have the Satisfaction to hope, I have, not without good Effect, attempted it on some other.

Before you had taken on you, Sir, to write about *Church-Power*, you ought to have known — That, by the Constitution and Laws of *England*, the *Convocation* is really no Part of its *Government*; no Branch of its *Ruling-Powers*; has no Share of its *Legislative Authority* at all. To be amply convince'd of this, I shall lead you to Authorities which you will have no *Countenance* nor *Power*, however strong your *Inclination* may be, to contest. To some great ones, in the *Law*, you have already been directed *, which you have (and with good Reason) *not* presumed to dispute. Turn your Attention, now, to some of your own *Bishops*; the Ornament, the Supports, the Glory of your Church: Who were honoured with the first Rank among those *Pastors* and *Governors*, with whom *alone* you declare *Church-Power* is lodged.

A Gentleman of your Condition hath, no doubt, heard, at least, of the Writings of those venerable Names *Burnet*, *Kennet*, *Nicholson*, *Hody*, and particularly *Wake*, your late excellent Archbishop, on this Subject of the *Convocation*.

A due Attention to their learned *Researches* on this Point, will effectually ease your Mind of the Errors it labours under. From the *last* of these great Persons, I shall present you with a few *Extracts*, to set right your Misapprehensions as to the real Constitution and Nature of your *Church*; which you seem (excuse my Freedom) extremely unacquainted with, and not at all to understand.

To root up, and destroy for ever, the dangerous Absurdity of *two* independent Powers (i. e. the Power you are claiming for your *Pastors* and *Governors*, independent of the *Civil Magistrate*) the Wisdom of our Legislature hath enacted and decreed; “by the Statute “25 *Henry VIII.* called the *Act* of *SUBMISSION*.

* Dissent. Gent. 1 Letter, Page 13.

“ 1st. That the *Convocation* should from thenceforth
 “ be assembled only by the *King's Writ*. 2dly. That
 “ it should make no *Canons* or *Constitutions* but by Vir-
 “ tue of the *King's Licence*, first given them, so to do.
 “ 3dly. That having agreed on any *Canons* or *Consti-*
 “ *tutions*, they should yet neither *publish* nor *execute*
 “ them, without the *King's Confirmation* of them:
 “ Nor, 4thly. By *his Authority*, execute any, but with
 “ these Limitations; that they be neither against the
 “ *King's Prerogative*, nor against any *Common* or *Sta-*
 “ *tute Law*; nor, finally, in any other Respect con-
 “ trary to the *Customs* of the Realm.” Vid. *Wake's*
Appeal, &c. Page 4.

The learned *Metropolitan* further informs you * ———
 “ That Christian Princes have a Right; and from
 “ *Constantine* the Great, down thro' succeeding Ages,
 “ have exerted the Right; not only of exercising Au-
 “ thority over *Ecclesiastical* Persons, but to interpose
 “ in ordering *Ecclesiastical* Affairs ——— That when
 “ the *Civil Magistrate* advised with the Clergy about
 “ calling a *Synod*, it was not look'd upon as a Matter
 “ of *Right*; but that he often called *Synods* without
 “ such Advice: And when the Bishops have ear-
 “ nestly desired a *Council*, and it has been refused by
 “ the Magistrate, they have submitted, and not rec-
 “ kon'd themselves to have a *Right* to meet without his
 “ Leave——When a *Synod* was resolved on, the *Prince*
 “ determin'd, or allow'd, the Time and Place of
 “ Meeting. and what *Persons* should come to them
 “ ——— When *Synods* are assembled, he shews, the
 “ *Civil Magistrate* has a Right to prescribe the *Matters*
 “ on which they are to debate; as also the *Manner*
 “ and *Method* of their Proceedings in them; and, if
 “ he pleases, to sit in, and preside over them; or to
 “ appoint his *Commissioner* to do it in his Stead. (Thus
 “ *Ld. Cromwell*, a Lay Person, sat in, and presided
 “ over the *Convocation* for the King, *Hen. VIII.*) They
 “ cannot *dissolve* themselves, nor *depart* from Council
 “ but by the *King's Licence*——Their Definitions are

* *Wake's* Authority of Christian Princes, &c. Page 10.

“ *no further obligatory*, than as ratified and confirm’d
 “ by *CIVIL Authority*.——That the *Prince* is not
 “ obliged to confirm whatever the Clergy shall think
 “ fit to determine; but has a Power of annulling and
 “ rejecting what they have done; to alter or improve,
 “ to add to or take from it.——He denies the *in-*
 “ *herent Authority* of the Church to make any Syno-
 “ *dical authoritative Definitions*; or that the sitting of
 “ *Convocations* is any Right of the Church.——And
 “ says, that as even the King’s *Licence* cannot give the
 “ *Convocative Authority* to promulge or execute any
 “ *Canons*, but what are agreeable to the *Customs* and
 “ *Laws* of the Realm; so he ought to submit them to
 “ the Examination of his Council *learned in the Law*;
 “ by them to be *advised*, whether they are thus agree-
 “ able, before he confirms them *.”

So that the *Convocation*, you see, are not so much as
 the King’s *Supreme Council* in *ecclesiastical Affairs*.
 There are *others* who are to judge *after* them; to sit as
 a Check *above* them; to inspect, controul, approve or
 reject the *Advice* they give the King; even his Council
learned in the Law.

The Archbishop adds——“ That as the King has
 “ Power, without a *Convocation*, to make and publish
 “ such Injunctions as HE *shall think* the Necessities of
 “ the Church to require, and to *command* the Observ-
 “ ance of them: So he may, with the Advice and
 “ Consent of his Parliament much more, (i. e. I ap-
 “ prehend, he may *without*, much more *with*, their
 “ Advice and Consent) make what *ecclesiastical Laws*
 “ he shall think fitting, for the Discipline of the
 “ Church; and may alter, correct, disallow, or con-
 “ firm the Resolutions of the *Convocation* according to
 “ *his own Liking* †.”

And, finally, he gives a List of a great Number of
Alterations, Reviews, and Reforms in ecclesiastical
 Matters, which have been done entirely by SELECT
 COMMITTEES, without any Advice or Consent of a

* *Wake's Authority of Christ, Pr. &c.* Page 130. † *Ibid.* Page 136.

Convocation (through all the several Reigns of *Hen. VIII. Edw. VI. Q. Eliz. James I. and Charles I.*) When the King having first appointed a certain Number of *Bishops and Clergymen* (whether they shall be *Clergy* or *Laity*, or what Number of *each*, is entirely in *his Choice*) to consider *what may be fit* to be ordered, then enjoins it by his *Royal Authority*. And adds (directly contrary to what you assert) That AFTER THIS MANNER, viz. by *select Committees*, (and Acts of Council) the Reformation of the Church of *England* was in great Measure carried on, and its *most important Affairs* transacted *. And in his *Appendix*, No. VII. he presents you with a long Catalogue of *Canons; Injunctions; new Translations of the Bible; Articles of Religion* set forth; *Explications* made of them; *Examinations* of Ceremonies; *Homilies* composed; *Prayers* sent to the Archbishop, with Orders for their public Use; *Visitations* of the whole Kingdom, with an entire Suspension of *Episcopal Jurisdiction*; (The *Visitors* were two Gentlemen, a Civilian, a Register, and only one *Divine*. *Echard's Hist. Eng.* Page 300.) new *Offices of Communion*; *other Offices* reform'd; new *Catechism* drawn up, &c. &c.---All done by *private Commissions*, or otherwise, out of *CONVOCAATION* †. So that the *Clergy* in *Convocation* have not the least Ground to *claim* as a *RIGHT to be consulted* in any future Reformations or Reviews. If the Government shall indulge them with *Leave* to assemble, and to give their Sentiments on

* *Wake's Auth. of Chr. Pr. &c.* Page 256. The King, says *Fuller*, would not intrust the *Convocation* with a Power to meddle with Matters of *Religion*, from a just Jealousy he had of the ill Affection of the major Part thereof; who, under the fair Rind of Protestant Profession, had the rotten Core of *Romish Superstition*. It was therefore conceived safer for the King to rely on the Ability and Fidelity of some *Select Confidants*, cordial to the Cause of *Religion*, than to adventure the same to be discuss'd and decided by a suspicious *Convocation*. *Church-History*, Book VII. Page 421.

† *Whether?* And in what Method, our present Governors may think proper to attempt any further Review, I presume not to guess: But, perhaps may be allow'd to say, That whoever knows the real History of *English Conventions*; and observes the narrow and bigotted Spirit; the petulant, censorious, uncatholic and rigid Temper, which has ever generally prevail'd there; especially, in its inferior Members; will indulge but faint Hopes of *Reformations* from that Quarter.

these Things, it is to be gratefully received, as a Matter of *Grace*, not of *Right*; and to be used with due Humility and Deference to the *ROYAL Judgment*; in which the *SUPREME ecclesiastical Wisdom* is by our Constitution declared, and by all our Clergy acknowledg'd to reside.

By this Time, no question, Sir, you have an humbler and juster Sense of the *Power* of a *Convocation*; and perceive it to be no Part of our *Government*, and that it has no *Legislative Power* or Authority in these Realms.

Your favourite *fantastic Scheme*, then, “ of *Pastors* and *Governors* having the *SOLE POWER* as to Church *Matters*; and that the Civil Magistrate has NONE AT ALL * ” is really, you now see, of very dangerous and important Consequence; actually subversive of our present happy *Constitution*; wrests from the King and *Parliament* an high Branch of their *Prerogative*; impeaches their *supreme Authority*; attempts to set up another *Legislative Power*; and is a deep *Indignity* cast upon our *Reformation* from *POPERY*, which was effected ONLY by the *Civil Magistrate*, your boasted *Pastors* and *Governors* struggling vehemently against it. Are *these* the Returns you make for the Indulgence of that Government, by whose Favour you live at Ease upon the Labour and Sweat of others! —

The Times of *Hen. VIII. Edw. VI. and Qu. Eliz.* you say, were extraordinary Times, and the *Regal Supremacy* was then raised to an *undue Height*. But, see how the Case stood, when the Church was in the Zenith of its Prosperity and Power! I mean at the Passing the *Act of Uniformity* of *Charles II.* In the Preamble of which you have the Sentiments of the Legislature, and of that your *most religious King*, which recites to this Effect——“ That the Book of *Common Prayer*, &c. having been injoin'd to be used by the Statute 1st *Elizab.* and since that by the Neglect of Ministers, great Inconveniences and Schisms hav-

“ ing happen’d ; for Prevention thereof, and for Set-
 “ tling the Peace of the Church, &c. the King had
 “ granted his Commission to some Bishops and other
 “ Divines to review the *Common Prayer Book*, and to
 “ prepare such Alteration and Advice as they thought
 “ fit to offer. And that afterward his Majesty having
 “ called a Convocation, and having been pleased to
 “ authorize and require them to review the same Book,
 “ and make such Alterations as to them should seem
 “ meet, and to exhibit and present the same to his
 “ Majesty, for his further *Allowance* or *Confirmation* ;
 “ and the same having been done ; his Majesty hath
 “ duly consider’d, and fully approved and allowed the
 “ same ; and recommended to this present Parliament
 “ that the same shall be appointed to be used in all
 “ Churches,—Whereupon it is enacted, &c.”

See here, how poor a Figure *the Power* of your *Con-*
vocation makes when shining in its highest Glory ! The
 Clergy are *authorized* and *required* by the King to pro-
 pose Alterations in Church Ceremonies and Forms, for
 HIS CONSIDERATION and ALLOWANCE, as *Supreme*
Head of the Church. The King *approves* and *allows*
 such of them as he thinks fit ; but in order to their
 having Power at all to oblige the Members of the
 Church, the King recommends them to his Parliament ;
 who turn them into a *Law*. And thus only they ac-
 quire all their *obliging* Force. What, now, did the
 Clergy in all this Affair ! but give their Advice.
 Which might have been taken, or refused : So Law-
 yers, incapable of voting in Parliament, are often *con-*
sulted in Forming and Making Laws ; shall they there-
 fore set up for a Share in the *Legislative* Power ; and
 exalt themselves from *Subjects* to be *Rulers* in the State ?

And when a most happy *Alteration* was, afterward,
 made in this Law, by the *Act of Toleration* ; which so
 deeply affected the Forms and Ceremonies of the
 Church, with regard to a great Number of the Sub-
 jects of this Kingdom, Pray, tell me ! What Hand
 had the *Convocation* and Clergy in that important
Church-Affair ?

And

And as Forms of *Worship*; so Matters of *Faith* are enacted into Laws, judg'd and punish'd, entirely by the *Civil Magistrate*, without any Intervention or Assistance of the *Clergy*. By the Statute of 9th and 10th of *William III.* it is enacted,——That if any Person shall be convicted in the Courts of *Westminster*, or at the *Affizes*, of denying any one of the Persons of the *Trinity* to be GOD: Or, of maintaining that there are more GODS than one: Or, of denying the *Christian Religion*, or the Authority of the *Scriptures*; he shall forfeit—be imprison'd, &c.—Here, again, you see the Jurisdiction and Decision of the great *Articles of Faith* declared by Parliament to be in the *Lawyers*.

And as to the Punishment of *Vice* and *Irreligion*, the Statutes against Drunkenness, Cursing, Swearing, the Breach of the Sabbath, &c. sufficiently shew that the Parliament and Common-Law Courts have taken to themselves the Cognizance of *these*. And what now becomes of your *Ecclesiastical* Dominion and *Canonical* Settlement for above 200 Years? When it has been, and might in innumerable other Instances be shewn, that the King and Parliament have all along claimed and exerted a *Supreme* Right in Matters of Religion, Faith, Worship, and Practice. Your *Ecclesiastical Courts*, indeed, are sometimes permitted to take Cognizance of some of these Matters; but then it is to be remember'd. 1. That these are the *King's* Courts; to be held only in his Name. 2. The *Judges* in these Courts often are, always may, and (say many of your most learned Clergy) ought *ever* to be *Laymen*. And, 3. The King, whenever he pleases, stays their Proceedings; grants *Prohibitions*; takes Causes out of them, and removes them into his Courts of Common Law.——What, now, is become of the *original, radical* JURISDICTION, which you claim for your *Pastors* and *Governors*!

But to return to the *Convocation*,——Our excellent *Constitution*, you see, hath with great Sagacity circumscribed its Power, and reduced it to a mere Shadow, or

just nothing at all. Ecclesiastical *Synods*, from the famous *Council of Nice*, down to the not-famous *Convocation of L—n*, *An. 1717*. sad Experience hath shewn to have been little else than the Pests and Troubles of Mankind; Mints where pernicious *Errors* have received the Stamp of Authority, and been sent out to corrupt the Church, and to set the World in Flames; and that, for the most Part, they have been *Conventions* of interested, ambitious, factious and angry Men; who under a fair Pretence of *Zeal for the Lord of Hosts*, have been driving furiously and foully on in Pursuit of worldly Views; and with an Affectation of being thought *contending earnestly for the Faith*, have been only contending, like the Disciples, who should be *greatest among themselves*. This the Wisdom of our *Legislature* knew to have been the *Manner, the Practice* immemorial, of ecclesiastical *Synods*; and therefore guarded, with great Discretion, against the portentous Evil; denied them all *Legislative Power*; subjected them entirely to the Authority of the *Civil Magistrate*; and thus hardly restrained them from throwing, as they have often done, the World into Confusion; and filling the Church with everlasting Debates.

And now, Sir, having thus laboured your Edification, in a Point of high Importance, where, 'tis certain, you greatly needed it; by this Time you begin to see, not the *Futility* only, but the *Presumption*, and the real *Danger* of your Scheme. That it is a Suggestion as *groundless*, as it is *ungrateful* and *ill-timed*, that our Reformation was not effected in a *legal* and *right Manner*. You see, that, by representing the *Magistrate* as having no Power in *Church-Matters*, you undermine that *glorious Structure*; betray it into *Popish Hands*; and subvert the very Foundation of your own admired Church: And that by laying so *essential* a Stress, as you do, upon the *Convocation's Assent* to the Act of *Uniformity*, by which the *Reformation* and the *present Church* was establish'd, you suggest to a crafty *Jesuit* unanswerable Matter to insult and expose both.

For,

For, pray, the *Jesuit* will ask, How was that *Assent* of the Convocation obtain'd? Was it not by the Magistrates *Depriving* the holy Bishops; and *Thrusting out* the Church's *Pastors* from those Seats, and from that Authority which GOD had given them therein? And can the *Assent* of a Convocation thus *pack'd* by the Magistrate, make that *legal*, *canonical*, and *ecclesiastically right*, which was before illegal, uncanonical, and ecclesiastically wrong?

Besides, to talk of the *Convocation's* ASSENT and CONCURRENCE, is Language altogether *unconstitutional*, and has a great deal too *assuming* and *presumptuous* an Air. *Submission*, Sir, and *Obedience* is all the Convocation was *capable* of giving. The King may give his *Assent*, and either House of *Parliament* may give their *Assent*, and thereby confirm and give Authority to any Act: But should the Magistrates of a Country Town talk of *FURTHER* *Confirming* it by THEIR *Concurrence* and *Assent*; which would they most provoke, your Indignation, or your Mirth? And yet, the *Corporation* of a *Cornish* Burrough, Sir, has, as much *Right*, by our Constitution, to talk of *Ratifying* by their *Assent* any Law of the Crown, as the *Convocation* itself *.

And hence, by the Way, you see the extreme Vanity of your Imagination — “ That the Civil Magistrate, by ratifying the XXth *Articles*, hath recognized and owned *the Power* to be not in *himself*, but “ in *the Church* † ” --- i. e. as you are pleased to understand it, in *the Clergy*. By what Logick, Sir, do you make *the Church*, in that Article, to mean *the Clergy*? Are not the LAITY also an *essential* Part of the *Church*? Does not the very preceding Article, XIXth, expressly

* The *Convocation* never gave their Assent at all to the *Articles of Religion* in K. Edward's Reformation. And all the Assent they ever gave to Q. Elizabeth's (as far as I can find) was the setting forth the *Articles*, which was not done till January 1563: Whereas the Reformation was establish'd by the First of Eliz. January 1558. Vid. Fuller Ch. Hist. B. IX. Page 52 and 72.

† 1 Defence, Page 17. Appendix, Page 5.

declare

declare they are? Defining the Church—to be a *Congregation of faithful Men*---But, would you impute to the *Magistrate* so tame, so absurd, so ridiculous a Part, as publickly to *disown* himself to have *any Power* in Church Matters: Yea to *deny* himself to belong to the *Congregation of the Faithful*! Yes, with Astonishment be it seen, this is what you are not ashamed openly to impute to him. “For the King and Parliament, you “say, have plainly *disowned* any such Power, as we “are speaking of, in *themselves*; and recognized it to “be in the *Church*; and no Body imagines that by *the “Church* they mean *themselves*.*”——But if by declaring it to be in *the Church*, they have *disowned* it to be in *themselves*; they have, thereby, also *disowned* themselves to be of the *Congregation of the Faithful*; for *this Congregation* they declare to be *the Church*, to whom *this Power* belongs. Besides; this is supposing *the King* to *disown* and *give up* a Power which the whole Legislature hath solemnly vested in him; and which every *Bishop* and *Ecclesiastick* in the Kingdom (till the Time of K. William) did swear, that he believed in his Conscience to be true, under the Penalty of a *Premunire*, viz. “That the King is the only *supreme* GOVERNOR of this Realm; as well in all *spiritual* or *ecclesiastical* Things or Causes, as *temporal*; “and that they will assist and defend him in such “Jurisdiction and Authority.”

See, now, the hopeful State to which you have brought the *Civil Magistrate*! You have made him to divest himself of *all Power* as to Church Matters, and to recognize it to be in *you*, the *Clergy*. He is now, therefore, in all these Affairs, to be subject to *you* his HIGHER POWERS. You have Authority from GOD to make *Laws*, and to prescribe *Rites*, which Kings and Parliaments are to obey: *To bind your Kings in Chains*, spiritual, ecclesiastic *Chains*——Rise up, O ye Kings, to these your *Pastors* and *Governors*! be in-

* 1 Defence, Page 17.

structed,

structed, and pay Homage to their *spiritual* Decrees! This Doctrine was the happy Engine, which hath often lifted *bumble* Bishops, to the *high* Places of the Earth; hath made *Kings* bow down before them, and subjected *Emperors* to their Feet.

Ecclesiastical Affairs, Sir, you are too sagacious not to know, take in a mighty Compass; and very naturally comprehend the *Principles*, the *Manners*, the whole *social* and *moral* Conduct, of those over whom these holy Pastors are to *watch*. Thus the *Priests of the Church* have exalted themselves, for many Ages, to be *Princes of the World*; and by Claims of *spiritual* Power, have hook'd in enormous Shares of *temporal* Grandeur and Wealth. But, is this a *proper Time*, think you, to revive and to press Pretensions of this Kind? Thank Heaven, that Darkeness is pass'd! The Light of *Christian Liberty* dawns gloriously upon us; and exposes all such *fanatic* Claims to just Scorn and Reproach.

But—I press you no farther——You begin to relent. Having urg'd you with the Weight of your XXXIV *Article*, which you have frequently subscribed; and of your XXX *Canon* to which you have solemnly sworn; both which declare positively, *your Church Ceremonies to be ordain'd by the Authority of the CIVIL MAGISTRATE*; you are, at length, constrain'd to own their Force. But, without the Honour of Retracting your former dangerous Assertion, “*That the Magistrate has no such Power at all* *.” You are now brought to acknowledge——“*That the Truth of the Case is, all our Ceremonies, and Forms of Worship, are ordain'd, as they ought to be, both by ecclesiastical and CIVIL Authority* †.” Honestly said at last! Well, if by *Civil Authority*, then the Magistrate has *some Power* in Ordering *Church Matters*; which you have all along denied him; and then the Power is not vested *solely* in the Pastors and

* 1 Defence, Page 18, 19.

† Appendix, Page 13.

Governors, as with great Pertinacity you have insisted it was. *Render then to Cæsar, the Things which are Cæsar's*; and lift not up the Heel against the Hand by whose Bounty you are so liberally fed.

You are now willing, I find, to compromise the Matter, and to go Shares with the *Magistrate*, in the Enjoyment of this Power; and presume to talk of an *ALLIANCE*, and of *TERMS* on which it stands, betwixt the State and the Church. This *ALLIANCE*, Sir, is a mere *Phantom*, conjured up by the Strength of a late warm Imagination, to preserve at least a *Shadow* of its lost Power to the Church *. Neither our *History*, nor our *Laws* know any Thing at all of it. The Nature of our *Constitution* utterly disowns it; and avows the Church to be *not an ALLY*, but a *SUBJECT* to the State. An *ALLIANCE* supposes *Independency* in the Powers betwixt whom it stands. But, by the famous *Act of Submission*, the Church hath resign'd all Pretensions to *Independency*; and given up its Powers into the Hands of the State. The Truth of the Case is this. A few Centuries past, the Church was found guilty of a dangerous *Rebellion* and *HIGH-TREASON* against the State: Whilst it lay thus at Mercy, as a Criminal before its Judge, its Pardon and Life were given it, *upon the TERMS* of its Resigning all Claims of *Independency*, and Submitting itself thenceforward to the Will of the Prince. But behold! these *Terms of Submission*, you have now, it seems, refined into *Terms of Alliance*; and the Church from a *pardon'd Criminal*, now claims to be a *rival Power*; and to have its Rights and Jurisdiction *independent* of the State. "Our Ceremonies and Forms of Worship are ordain'd by ECCLESIASTICAL, as well as CIVIL Authority." But these, alas! are but Illusions which mock your heated Fancy; for ecclesiastical Authority, as distinguish'd from *civil*, you may rest assured, there is none. Ask your learned *Bishops*, and they will utterly disclaim it. Ask your

* See a late excellent Comment on WARBURTON'S *Alliance*, &c.

able *Lawyers*; and they will tell you, that you incur the Danger of a *Premunire* by presuming to exert any one single Act of Authority of this Kind. Ask all the knowing Members of the *Convocation* itself, and they will answer, with one Voice, '*Tis not in us* ——— AUTHORITY *we have none*. Yea; Ask the meanest *Novice* in the History of the *Reformation*, and of the *Establishment* of your Church; and he will presently acquaint you, that your *Ceremonies and Forms* were NOT ordain'd by BOTH *ecclesiastical and civil Authority*; but by *civil Authority ONLY*: The *Ecclesiasticks* in *Convocation*, and in the *two Universities*, obstinately *refusing* to give their Concurrence; and even entering their very solemn and zealous Protest against it.

But, you are still harping that the *Convocation* at last gave their Assent. Pray! how did they give it? Not till they had been first *garbled* and *pack'd* by the Magistrate: All the *Bishops*, save one, exiled, imprison'd, turn'd out, by his Authority; and *new*, according to his Taste, put into their Room; besides, the invincible Artillery of *Deaneries, Prebends, snug and fat Livings* play'd strongly upon the inferior *Clergy*: Many *Dignitaries* amongst these, also, being *deprived* by the civil Power. And, is it strange that the *Convocation*, thus powerfully attack'd, made no long Resistance; but yielded, however *reluctant*, to what the *Parliament* had done*? But their Concurrence, I must again tell you, whether *free or forced*, gave, and could give, NO AUTHORITY to the *new Establishment*; because, by our Constitution, they had not the least Grain of AUTHORITY to give. Suppose the *Convocation* had refused their Concurrence to that Act of the Legislature; would

* Hear what even *Ecchard*, who was never suspected of *Partiality* against the Church, says:—"Fourteen *Bishops*, twelve *Deans*, twelve *Archdeacons*, fifteen *Heads of Colleges*, fifty *Prebendaries*, and eighty *Rectors*, were deprived by the QUEEN. But it was strongly believed, that, of the rest, the greatest Part complied against their Consciences; and would have been ready for another Turn, if the Queen had died while that Race of *Incumbents* lived, and the next Successor had been of another Religion." *Ecchard's Hist. Eng.* Page 330.

the Law not have had its Force? You dare not affirm it. Suppose, again, the Clergy had establish'd any *new Forms*, without an *Act of Parliament*; would the People have been obliged to yield Obedience to them? neither durst you assert this.

However, not to discourage good Beginnings, I will take you where you are——We are come, then, to this Issue. That the *civil Magistrate* has Power to ordain *Ceremonies and Rites of Worship*, and to make *new Terms* of Christian Communion; and that the Things of this Kind which are done in the Church of *England*, are done, at least in Part, by *CIVIL Authority*. This is what you now grant. But the *Question* then returns, with unanswerable Weight upon you——Who gave him *this Power*? WHAT *Charter* hath lodg'd it in him? Not, surely, the *Scriptures*; the only Charter of the *Christian Church*. For all the *Power* or *Authority* which the *Scriptures* give the *Magistrate* relates only, and can relate but, to Things of a *civil Nature*; and cannot at all relate to Things of *Worship* and *Religion*. This never can be contested, because the *Magistrate* was, at the Time, when the *Scriptures* were wrote, and for near three hundred Years after, *Infidel* and *Pagan*. St. Paul, therefore, by commanding us *to be subject to the bigger Powers*; and to *obey Magistrates, for Conscience Sake, because they are the Ministers of GOD, for Good*——does not, in the least, require our Obedience to their Decrees as to *Ceremonies* and *Forms* of *Worship*; or, our *Conformity* to their Establishments, in Things of a *religious Nature*. No, St. Paul himself, and all the *Apostles* were very zealous *Nonconformists*. The grand Scope of all their Labours, their Preaching, their Lives was to persuade and draw Men off from the *establish'd Forms* of *Worship*; and to convince them that, in these Affairs, there was ONE King only, and ONE Lord to whom their Homage *alone* was due: Even JESUS, who by his Sufferings had merited this high Honour, and to whom *alone* GOD has commanded that, in Things of Religion, *every Knee shall bow*.

Here,

Here, then, I again call upon and provoke you to tell me——Who gave the *civil Magistrate* this Authority in *religious* Matters?—— You are *silent*, and cannot say——Well, then, if by the Command of *Almighty GOD*, and by the original Constitution of the *Christian Church*, he hath *none*; then, the Subjects of *JESUS CHRIST* are under no Obligation to obey his Injunctions, in Things of a *religious* Nature; consequently, are in no Fault in *Dissenting* from establish'd Forms; and consequently, your Censures of them, as *great SINNERS* for so doing, are extremely rash and uncharitable; for which it becomes you, to be humbled greatly before *GOD*, and to ask Pardon of *Men*.

See, now, the unhappy *Pinch* to which you are reduced——If you say the *Magistrate* has Authority to decree *Ceremonies*, and *Forms of Worship*, to make *new Forms* of Communion, and to determine *Controversies of Faith*——you then sin against the undoubted *Rights* and *Constitution* of the *CHRISTIAN Church*; against *GOD*, against *JESUS CHRIST*, against *Reason* and *Common Sense*. But if you say that he has not, you then sin against the Church of *England*, against its *Laws* and *Constitution*: You are a *Dissenter*, at least, in Principle; but, perhaps, have not *Fortitude* enough to sacrifice, what you call, your *Snugness*, by professing openly your *Dissent*.

Having thus considered the former Part of your *Self-Repugnant Scheme*. 1. That the *Magistrate* *has* not: And, 2. That he *has* the *Authority* which he claims and exercises in your Church: I should now proceed to the other, *viz. That it is lodged in the Church's Pastors and Governors*. But, here, to the Surprise of every attentive Reader, you content yourself with *Asserting*, without paying him the Compliment of so much as *Attempting to prove* them, possess'd of this Power. The *BIBLE*, I thought you knew, to be the *Religion of Protestants*; and the *SCRIPTURES*, the *only Rule* of their Practice and Faith. But behold! A *Protestant*, a *Divine*, claiming an high *Power* for his Pastors and

Governors; a *Power* in which the Peace and Purity of the Christian Church is *essentially* concern'd; and yet not able, nor when called upon *pretending*, to produce one single *Text of Scripture* in Support of this Claim.

I have pointed you to several exprefs *Commands* of the *Sacred Law*, which directly *forbid* and *condemn* this pretended *Power*; have shewn you, that *Christians* are the LORD's *Freed-Men*, that they are each for Himself, *to study, and teach the Scriptures*——*To examine and try the Spirits*——*To call no Man upon Earth MASTER*, and are not *to be called RABBI*, i. e. are neither to *acknowledge*, nor to *claim* any *Authority* over others in Things of Religion, *because ONE only is our Lawgiver and Master, in these Things, even CHRIST*; and all *Christians are Brethren*. That tho' the *Princes of the Gentiles exercise DOMINION over them*; and *they who are great, exercise AUTHORITY upon them*, it SHALL NOT BE SO AMONGST YOU——What have you replied, Sir, to these plain and direct *Commands*: Have you so much as *attempted* to evade their Force? No: but with conscious *Impotence* stand still; and see this *Scripture-Artillery* demolishing the boasted *Thrones* of your Pastors and Governors, and beating down the *high Places* to which your Imagination had raised them, without so much as extending a feeble *Hand* for their Support.

From what has been said, on the Point of *Church Power*, you see with how little Reason you plume yourself and Gentlemen of the Establishment, as the *only* proper Champions to encounter the Church of Rome——“Upon the Head of *Heresy, Schism, Ordination, Tradition, Church-Unity, and Catholic-Communion*, “no Protestant is so well qualified to write upon these, “and so likely to do it to the Conviction of a Papist, “as one of the Church of *England*; but, to be sure, “not a *Protestant Dissenter*.” What Protestant Dissenters can do on the *Popish Controversy*, the *Salter's-Hall Lectures* will shew to their lasting Honour. And,

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in Truth, all your mighty Champions, *Chillingworth, Hales, Stillingfleet, Middleton, &c.* in all their Conflicts with the Church of *Rome* have been ever forced to quit *their own*, and to borrow *our* Weapons; and to *these* alone have owed the Triumphs they have gain'd.

Councils, Fathers, the Church's Power to decree Rites and Authority in Controversies of Faith—are Armour in which no *Protestant* dares look a sagacious and learned *Jesuit* in the Face. No; but the *Sufficiency of Scripture*, and the *Right of private Judgment* (our distinguishing and proper Principles) are the *only* Method of Assault before which the *Romish* System immediately falls. These, Sir, if you know any Thing of the State of that Controversy, you must know to have been *the Principles* upon which your own learned Doctors have defended the Reformation; and *the Principles* on which alone it is *capable* of Defence. But then you are to remember also, that they are *Principles* on which the Church of *England* can never possibly be defended; and which, if faithfully and duly follow'd, would have brought *Chillingworth, and Hales, and Middleton* amongst us; and would make every *intelligent and honest* Protestant, in this Kingdom, a *Dissenter* from the establish'd Church.

For if *the SCRIPTURE* be, indeed, a *sufficient and perfect* RULE; what becomes of your *additional Splendors* (as you are pleased to call them) and your *Improvements* upon Christianity! What, of your Church's *Power to decree Ceremonies and Rites*! What, of *Sponsors* and the *Cross* in Baptism, *Kneeling* at the Lord's Supper, *Bowing* to the East, &c! of which the *SCRIPTURES*, the *sufficient and perfect* Rule, say not a Word. And if the *Right*, and the *Duty of private Judgment* be acknowledg'd, into what a Fume, alas! evaporates the Church's boasted *Authority in Controversies of Faith*! Your learned Doctors themselves felt, and own'd, the Difficulty of the Part they had to act. And 'tis, really, pleasant to observe; how, in their Attacks upon *Dissenters*,

fenters, *Councils* and *Fathers*, *Church-Authority* and *Church-Power*, the *Danger* and *Sin of Schism*, &c. are gravely muster'd up, and plied warmly upon us. But no sooner does a crafty *Jesuit* come forth arm'd, *Cap a Pe*, with Weapons of this Kind, than away they are all flung! to our Quarters they retreat! Then, *the BIBLE*, *the BIBLE only is the Religion of Protestants*, and every Man is to *read*, and to *judge for himself*; then, not those, who *separate* from a Church, that imposes unlawful (unscriptural) Terms, are guilty of *Schism*; but the Church alone is guilty in *imposing* such Terms.

A slight Attention will shew you, with how extremely *ill a Grace* a Church of *England* Divine must appear upon the Head of *Schism*, *Tradition*, *Church-Unity*—Who by the *TRADITION'S of Men* (Sponsors, the Cross, &c.) hath notoriously made void the *Commandment of GOD* (to receive one another, but not to doubtful Disputations *.) Who breaks, in a flagrant Manner, the *UNITY* of the *Christian Church*, by setting up *NEW Forms* of Fellowship and Communion in it; and by casting out such as *Christ* receives into it: And who declares, before the World, against *CATHOLIC-COMMUNION*, by refusing to admit any to the *two Sacraments* of Religion; except, besides what *Christ* and his *Apostles* have ordain'd, they submit also to some Rites which *themselves* have ordain'd, as *Improvements* upon the Plan which the inspired *Apostles* left.——And is this, now, a *Man* to encounter *Remiss* Emissaries? Must he not go forth with infinite Disadvantage, and feel his own Weapons turn'd violently upon himself? But, the *Dissenter*, who stands fast to his distinguishing and proper Principles (*Sufficiency of Scripture*, and *Right of private Judgment*) at once beats them from the strong Holds of *Councils* and *Fathers* (where you have been assaulting, but hardly able to dislodge them) and makes all their *learned So-*

* Rom. XIV. 1.

phistry fall before the Sacred Force of the BIBLE and COMMON SENSE. And hence it is, as before observed, that the Swarms of unhappy Profelytes, which these Seducers are said to make, are *all* drawn from *your*, not *one* that I have ever heard of, from *our* Churches: Your Doctrines and Forms too naturally preparing them to take that fatal Step.

But it is Time that we now quit the Subject of *Church-Power*. I have treated it the more largely, because it enters into the *Essence*, and is the one single Point, every Person sees, on which the whole *Controversy* turns. Your other two Points, the *Sacramental Test*, and the *Regal Supremacy*, I shall dismiss in fewer Words:

As to the First, The *Sacramental Test*—I perceive nothing in your *Appendix* which either *merits* or *needs* a particular Reply. Only because you still insist, *that as the Law now stands, the Priest has a Power of Repelling evil Livers, when they come to receive the Sacrament, as a Qualification for a Place*; and by this wrong Apprehension, are kept from viewing the Affair in a Light so distasteful as it really deserves; I shall offer a few Things for your Illumination also here; Presuming, when you see, that *you have not Power*, in that Case, *to refuse the CHRISTIAN COMMUNION to the wickedest Man living*, you will groan under the disgraceful Yoke; and for the Honour of *Christianity*, and the Ease of your own Consciences, you will be the first to wish its Repeal. Now this is a *Point of Law*, and has been given against you, by the learned in that Profession. And, if you attentively weigh the Case, their *Opinion* will appear grounded upon Reasons of very great and unanswerable Strength. Because, if the Priest has a *Liberty of DISCRETION* in this Case, it is then in his Power to deprive the *King* of the Services of his loyal and good Subjects; as also, to deprive the *Subjects* of some of the most valuable Favours of the Prince; yea, the Priest has then a Power to put a *Negative*, in many Cases, upon the Nominations of his

SOVEREIGN to Posts of the highest Dignity and Importance in the State.

His Majesty appoints a Person to some great Office in his Army, his Household or his Fleet; but *the Law* forbids him *to act* (at least, but for a short Time) till he has first taken the *Sacramental Test*: He comes, therefore, according to *Law*, to qualify for his Place. No, Sir, answers the Priest; I say you are a prophane and wicked Man, a notorious *evil Liver*: I am authorized therefore by the *Rubric*, and commanded by the *Canon*, to refuse you the *Sacrament*; and, be assured, I will not give it——So here is the King's Commission, the Subject's Expectations, and the Officer's good Services, all quash'd at once.

But can it enter into an Imagination so vague as even *yours*, that our *Laws* have put it in the Priest's Power thus to bar the King's Commission to a *General*, an *Admiral*, a *Secretary of State*. Gentlemen who too much merit, perhaps, the Character of *evil Livers* may, sometimes, by the *Royal Choice* be appointed to high temporal Offices; and may be capable of discharging them with great Advantage to their Country, and great Honour to themselves. But, must the Priest's *Consent* be ask'd! at his *Discretion* must it lie! whether the Person, whom the *King* hath honour'd with an high Commission, shall presume to proceed in the Execution of his Trust!——Yes, it really thus lies in the Priest's Power (you will have it) to put a *Negative* upon the Crown. Without the Priest's *Approbation* of him, as being NOT an *evil Liver*, no Officer shall presume, nor can be qualified by *Law to act*.

I congratulate you much, Sir, that you are now even with the *civil Magistrate*. The *Noli Prosequi's* and *Prohibitions* he has granted to stop Proceedings in your *ecclesiastical Courts*, have been Matter of long Grievance: Now, you have it in your Power to make ample *Reprizals* on him. You have now a Power, by *Law*, to judge *after*, *above*, the King. Tho' his Majesty ever so much *wants* and *desires* the Services of a
brave

brave Officer, you are first to *sit in Judgment* on him ; to consider whether he is an *evil Liver* ; and according as you pronounce concerning his *moral Character*, he shall, or shall not, be qualified and allowed to act—— These, doubtless, are the Days, of which blessed *Laud* is said to prophesy ! Who *hoped to see the Time, when no Jack Gentleman in England should dare to stand cover'd before the meanest Priest*. The holy *Martyr*, indeed, died unblest'd with the Sight. But, *you*, his Son and Successor in Doctrine and Spirit, are taking bold Strides to reach *Pisgab-Top*, from whence to feast your Eyes with that *promised* happy State.

I might rest the Matter here——and hope you are now convinced of the presumptuous and high Nature of *the Power* you are thus, publicly, again claiming for *the Priest* : But, to silence for ever all Doubts on this Head, I will present you with an *Authority* of irresistible Weight. This is no other than the lower House of *Convocation*, *An. 1704* ; staunch Champions for the Church, you know, as ever honour'd the *British Isle* ; in their Address to the upper House, amongst *Gravamina Cleri* Grievances to be redress'd, they represent——
 “ The increasing Difficulties of the parochial *Clergy*,
 “ about administering the holy Sacrament indifferently
 “ to all Persons who demand it, in order to qualify
 “ themselves for Office ; because they see not how
 “ they could, in several Cases, act conformably to the
 “ *Rubrics* and *Canons* of the Church, in Repelling
 “ such Persons as were *unworthy*, and particularly no-
 “ torious *Schismatics*, without exposing themselves to
 “ vexatious and expensive Suits at Law ” *——This was the *Construction* which this learned Body of *Clergy*, you see, put upon this *Law* ; but a *Construction*, because I had made it, which you, blest'd with superior Light, take upon you to pronounce——“ *forced, unnatural, whimsical, unequitable* † ”——Happy 'tis nothing worse !

* *Tindal's Hist. Eng.* Vol. III. Page 636.

† *Append. Page 20.*

But, to conclude this Point——If, as the Law now stands, *the Priest has*, as you affirm, *a Power to repel evil Livers*; pray! what is the Reason that the *Rubrics* and *Canons*, which so solemnly oblige him to it, are not only, not *faithfully* observed, but most shamefully violated, and quite trampled under Foot? Why, amongst the Swarms of *notorious* evil Livers, *Hereticks*, *Blasphemers*, and open *Unbelievers*, who continually come to the LORD'S TABLE, to qualify for a Place; do we never hear of *one* rejected by the Priest? What! is there no Conscience, no Virtue, no Integrity or Honour left amongst those who administer this holy Rite of Religion! seeing the *Rubric* requires, and the *Canons* obliges to *reject* these evil Livers; and the *Scandal* of receiving them (both to *Deists* without, and to *Christians* within) is so crying and flagrant; Why, in the *Name of GOD*, whose *Ministers* and *Stewards* you profess yourselves to be, are these *Enemies* to his Government, these *Aliens* from his Family, these *Despisers* of his Son, never rejected, but ever tamely received, as *his CHILDREN*, to *his TABLE*——Why! but because the Priest *knows* there is a *LAW* which hangs heavily over him, and threatens to punish with severe Penalty its Breach: And this being the Case, he chuses rather to throw himself upon the Mercies of GOD, than upon the Indignation of *Man*.

And now, Sir, if with this dreadful and oppressive Yoke upon your Neck; whilst scoffing *Infidels* laugh, and discerning *Christians* mourn; you are easy and well pleased; and bless yourself, and your Church in the Protection of *this Law*: All I shall say, at present, is, that I envy not your Felicity; but heartily thank Heaven I have neither Lot nor Share in this Matter. Only, hear the *Word*, which GOD sent by his *Prophet* of old to certain Time-serving *Priests*. Ezek. XLIV. 6, 7. *Thou shalt say to the rebellious House; let it suffice you of all your Abominations; in that ye have brought into my Sanctuary Strangers, uncircumcised in Heart, to be in my Sanctuary, to pollute it; even MY HOUSE,*

HOUSE, *when ye offer my Bread—they have broken my Covenant, because of all your Abominations.*

I have said too much on your *first* Topic, of *Church-Power*, to have either Room or Occasion to add many Things on your *last*, our *Constitution in Church and State*. Here, indeed, I observe with Pleasure, that amidst the Shew you affect to make of confuting my Account of the *regal Supremacy*, and of our *Constitution*, you hardly, in one single Instance, presume to contradict it. My Account, Sir, was founded upon *Fact* and upon *Law*. After close Examination, I suppose you found it to be so; and therefore tho' to save Appearances, you would seem to say something on this Subject also; yet in your whole 14 Pages, there is scarce the Shew of any Opposition to what I had advanced.

As for the *Form of speaking* in Use amongst us—*Our Constitution in Church and State*—That it is really an *Impropriety*, as generally understood, I do not at all hesitate (with due Submission to the great Authorities by whom it is used) again to insist. It is a *Form of speaking*, no doubt, drawn from the Usage of *Popish* Times; before the *Reformation* of our Religion took Place. For *then* there, truly, was a *Constitution in Church*, distinct from, and independent of, our *Constitution in State*. The Church had, then, its *Laws*, its *Rights*, its *Officers* and *Powers*, and its sovereign or supreme Head, *peculiar* to itself, and *apart* from the State. But, *now*, by the *Reformation* all that *Independency* and *Distinction* is abolish'd; it is now become entirely and absolutely a *civil System*: There are *now* no *Laws* in the Church (I mean none of *human* Enaction) but what were made by the *civil Magistrate*, and receive all their Obligation and Authority from him: There are now no *Officers* in the Church but what are constituted by the Authority and Direction of the *Magistrate*, and are all liable to be unmade and deprived again by him—But that our *Constitution in Church*, is nothing really, but a *civil* or *parliamentary* Constitution;

tution ; has, with incontestible Evidence, been shown in the preceding Letters ; and is a Truth, indeed, so plain, that no intelligent or sober Member of your Church will, I apprehend, so much as *attempt* to deny.

Our *Constitution*, therefore, being now chang'd by the happy *Reformation* ; so, doubtless, would this *Form of Speaking* too ; but seems to have been retain'd for Reasons of Policy, to sooth the *Weakness* of those who were then the *weakest* of all the People, and the most averse to the Reformation, I mean the *Clergy* *. With the same condescending Views, probably, it is still kept in Use ; but in real Strictness and Propriety to talk of our *Constitution in Church and State*, is not only to put the *Body* before the *Head*, the *Effect* before the *Cause*, the *Handmaid* before the *Mistress* ; but it is to convey an Idea your Authorities could not possibly intend to convey, because not founded in Truth, *viz.* That the *Church* has a *Constitution* distinct from, independent of, yea prior or superior to our *Constitution in State*.—By the Way, you will remember also, that the *Presbyterian Church of Scotland* is as *essential, fundamental, and unalterable* a Part of our *present CONSTITUTION*, as the *episcopal Church of England* can ever pretend to be.

My Account of the POWER which our Laws and Constitution give to the *Kings* and *QUEENS* of this Realm, in Affairs *ecclesiastical* ; to instruct, over-rule, direct, controul, all the *Archbishops, Bishops, and Priests* of this Kingdom, in all their *sacerdotal* and most *spiritual* Concerns, &c. you do not pretend to *litigate*, but rather attempt to *vindicate* and *explain*. But you unhappily forget the one grand and material *Point*, for which it was introduced ; and to which, above all other, it concern'd you to speak ; and that is, to *reconcile* this

* So because 'tis said---*The Lords Spiritual and Temporal*---Will any one therefore plead, that a *Bishop* is of higher Rank than a *Duke* ? 'Tis no more than giving a Lady the upper Place ; or, according to the apostolic Precept, *Honouring the weaker Vessel*. What Defect of *Argument* does it shew, to lay such Stress upon a meer *Compliment* !

Constitution of the Church of *England*, with the Constitution of the Church of *Christ*: And to shew, that *Dissenters* cannot separate from the *one*, without the *Danger* and the *high Crime* of Renting themselves from the *other*. This was what you asserted, and flourished copiously upon; but are now, I presume, too well instructed to endeavour to support. You now see them, Sir, to be two *distinct* and quite *different* Societies: And will be henceforward eased of those *painful* Commiserations over the Souls of your *dissenting* Brethren, with which your generous Mind labour'd; and be terrified no more with direful Apprehensions on Account of our *Schism*, which seem all your Life long to have *beld you in Bondage*.

There is a little *unhappy Slip* which, tho' not quite in Place, I shall take Notice of here—In *Page 13*: of your *Appendix*, you charge me “with *false Play* in “Citing your *XXXIV Article*, as *declaring expressly* “*that your Church Ceremonies were ordain'd by the civil* “*Magistrate*. And ask me—Did you find there “any such Words?” And yet, with agreeable Surprise, I find you either so uncautious, or so honest, as within a few Lines, to cite the very Words of the *Article*, which support, in the strongest Manner, the Sense I had given, where *an open and wilful Violation of these Ceremonies is*, by the Article declared, *to be an Hurting the Authority of the CIVIL MAGISTRATE*. Can a Violation of these Ceremonies violate the *Magistrate's* Authority, if by *his Authority* they had not been *ordain'd*?

But these are small Matters, in Comparison with what follows. The Affair of Mr. *Whiston* I thought you would gladly have let sleep. The Case, to be sure, rung much: You have been once and again flinging to rid yourself of it; but the Manner in which you now do it, rather sorely wounds, than gives you Relief. “You tax me with *Misrepresentation*, and with no “mean Talent that Way*.” Yea, have the Cou-

* Appendix, Page 39.

rage to confront me, with a Citation from Bp. *Burnet* to whom I had refer'd, as supporting my Account. But what will the World say, Sir! How will all your *Friends*, if not your *Heart*, reproach you! and the Learned, amongst whom you rank, hold you in great Derision! When they see you undertaking to give the Public an Account of his Lordship's *History* of that Case; but, either carelessly overlooking, or wilfully suppressing, the *material* and *important* Passages, which clearly and irrefragably support my Account.

"His Lordship, say you, * reports it thus——
 "That it seeming doubtful, whether the Convocation
 "could, in the first Instance, proceed against a Man
 "for Heresy; and it being certain that their Proceed-
 "ings, if not warranted by Law, might involve them
 "in a *Premunire*, the upper House, in an Address,
 "prayed the Queen to ask the Opinion of the Judges, and
 "such Others as she thought fit, concerning these Doubts,
 "that they might know how the Law stood in this
 "Matter." Here you stop short with the *Bishop's*
 Narration: having either not *Patience* to read, or not
Honesty to write further; and then, with Flourish,
 ask——"Will these Accounts now authorize you to
 "represent, as you do, the two Houses of Convocation,
 "as waiting upon her Majesty; and that too to be
 "instructed by her, and to learn her Judgment; and
 "not that neither, how the Law stood in Relation to
 "their Proceedings, but how the Gospel stood in Re-
 "lation to the Opinions of Mr. *Whiston*, and the Mys-
 "tery of the Trinity? And do you not now perceive
 "your Misrepresentation of the Case, and that I did
 "not talk without Book, when I spake of it as a *Speci-*
 "*men* of your Talent, which, indeed, is not mean
 "that Way."

There is one Thing I here perceive, Sir; which is, that if you do not *talk without Book*, yet when the *Book is before you*, you either want *Capacity* or *Integrity*

to make a proper Use of it. For besides the *partial* and *maim'd* Account which you have given of this Matter, his Lordship expressly adds the *important Passages* which follow; whence the *Public* will please to observe, with how little *Fairness* and *Truth* you treat this famous Case; and how great is both the *Church's* and *my own* Infelicity; she in having an *Advocate*, and I an *Opponent*, capable of such dishonourable and low Methods of Defence.

His Lordship says——“ That by the Act of 1st of
 “ *Elizabeth*, which defined what should be judged
 “ Heresy, *that Judgment* was declared to be in the
 “ CROWN——The Bishops in Convocation drew out
 “ several Propositions from Mr. *Whiston's* Books,
 “ which seemed plainly to be reviving of *Arianism*,
 “ and *censured* them as such. The lower House (ex-
 “ cepting to one Proposition) *censured* them in the
 “ same Manner. This the *Archbishop*, being then dis-
 “ abled by the Gout, sent by one of the *Bishops* to the
 “ QUEEN, for *her Assent*; (*Page 1194, Approbation*)
 “ who promised to CONSIDER OF IT. At their (the
 “ Convocation's) Meeting next Winter, no Answer
 “ being come from the QUEEN, *two BISHOPS* were
 “ sent to ASK it, and to receive her Majesty's *Pleasure*
 “ in it; but *she* could not tell what was become of the
 “ Paper the *Archbishop* had sent her. So an Extract
 “ of the *Censure* was again sent to her; but she
 “ THOUGHT NOT FIT to send *any Answer* to it. So
 “ *Whiston's* Affair slept, and all further Proceedings
 “ against him were stopp'd, *since the QUEEN did not*
 “ CONFIRM the Step that we had made; tho' he af-
 “ terward publish'd a large Work in four Volumes
 “ Octavo *.”

Here let it be noted. 1. The *Judgment* of what is, or is not, to be treated as *Heresy*, is, by our *apostolic* Constitution lodged *wholly* in the CROWN. The QUEEN, when such wears it, is the *proper*, the *sole*

* *Burget's* Hist. of his Times, Vol. VI. Page 1133, 34, 35, 94. Edit. 12mo.

Judge, what Doctrines and Books shall be *censured* as HERETICAL: What Principles and Tenets are, or are not, contrary to the holy *orthodox* Faith:

Note. 2. The *two Houses*, having extracted several Passages from Mr. *Whiston's* Books, and *censured* them as *heretical* *; deputed first *one*, then *two* Bishops to wait upon the QUEEN, to ASK her *Approbation and Assent*, to receive her Majesty's Pleasure in this *Affair*, and to desire her *Confirmation*, without which, their *Censure* was of not the least Signification or Validity in the Church.

3. Upon the Receipt of this Request the QUEEN, as *sole* Judge, promised to CONSIDER of it. The *Affair* was of great Importance, *viz.* "What the primitive *apostolic* Doctrine was concerning the *Trinity*, " *Incarnation*, *Nature*, and *Generation of the Logos*? " Whether there were *three* Persons existing in *one* undivided Substance: Or, whether the *Logos* was " distinct in Essence from the Father; not created, " nor made, but in an ineffable Manner, begotten " from Eternity? And, Finally, Whether the *apostolical Constitutions* were a genuine and inspired Book; " and a true Part of the sacred Canon?" Her Majesty was now applied to, by her two Houses of *Convocation*, and requested, as *SOLE JUDGE*, to pronounce *authoritatively* upon *these Points*, *i. e.* to tell them whether Mr. *Whiston's* Doctrine was to be received or rejected; to be considered as *Heresy*, or not, in this Church. The QUEEN, as became a wise Judge, refused to pronounce *rashly*: She took Time to CONSIDER of it; to weigh sedately in her Mind the Merits of the Cause, lest she should condemn the Innocent.

* The Archbishop and Bishops in their Address to the Queen, say, that Mr. *Whiston* had advanced several DAMNABLE and BLASPHEMOUS Assertions against the Doctrine and Worship of the ever blessed Trinity: And, in their Censure, they earnestly beseech all Christian People, by the Mercies of CHRIST, to take Heed how they give Ear to these false Doctrines, as they tender the Honour and Glory of our Saviour, &c.

Note, *The Scriptures*, and the *four first general Councils*, are the Measure set by Law, to judge of *Heresy*: Her Majesty, therefore, being now requested by her Clergy to judge *authoritatively* in this important Case, acted a worthy Part in *deferring* her JUDGMENT, till she had *examined* carefully *the Rule* by which she was to judge.

Observe. 4. After *the QUEEN* had taken Time *maturely* to CONSIDER of these deep and mysterious Points, she THOUGHT NOT FIT to send any Answer. Upon her Majesty's THOUGHTS, the Issue of this great Affair is seen absolutely to depend. Finally,

'Tis worthy to be observed. 5. That her Majesty's THOUGHTS and JUDGMENT, on this weighty Case, were quite DIFFERENT from those of her learned Bishops and Clergy. They thought Mr. *Whiston's* Writings "contain'd *damnable* and *wicked* Doctrines, and earnestly beseech all Christian People, by *the Mercies of Christ*, to take Heed how they give Ear, &c."—and judg'd them to deserve a public and solemn Censure: Her Majesty THO'T OTHERWISE. She did not THINK FIT to confirm the Step the Convocation had made. In Consequence of which, their Proceedings were all stop'd; and the solemn Censure they had passed with all their earnest Obtestations, by *the Mercies of CHRIST*, evaporate into Air.—What Improvements are here made, by the Wisdom of later Ages, in the primitive apostolic Plan! Behold *the WOMAN* now empower'd, not only to teach, but to usurp Authority over the Man; over all the Archbishops, Bishops, and Priests of this Realm; to vacate their most solemn Censures; to quash and stop at once their *spiritual* Proceedings, in an Affair where *blasphemous Doctrines*, and *damnable* and *wicked Errors*, were bringing Danger of everlasting Ruin to the Souls over whom they watch'd! See here, Sir, the *two Scales*, that are to try Doctrines and Opinions in your holy apostolic Church: In one is laid the united Judgment of all the Bishops and Clergy in Convocation convened; in the other, *the QUEEN's*

alone: Lo, the *former* mounts, and kicks the Beam! The *single* Judgment of *the* QUEEN, in the Balance of the Church, weighs more than *that* of all the learned Bishops and Priests of the Realm!

And is not this, now, exactly consonant to the Account I had given? "Is not here, Sir, the very
"comely and edifying Sight (at which you except) *
"of the two Houses of Convocation waiting upon the
"good Queen, to be instructed by her Majesty, whether that Gentleman's Books concerning the Trinitity were to be condemn'd, as heretical, or not?" Do they tell us, "you ask, of the Synod laying their
"Censure before the Queen, to have her Judgment
"upon it?" Yes—"And of their Waiting upon a
"WOMAN, who could be supposed to know as little
"of this Matter as of the Motion of the Stars, to
"learn *from her Mouth*, what the Church is to believe,
"and what to reject, as to this great Mystery of Faith?" Yes, you see, with your own Eyes, that this is really the Case. Why, Sir, will you constrain me to expatiate upon Things which reflect no Honour upon the Church; and by a rash and indiscreet Defence *hurt* the Cause you would support! How much wiser is the Part your *candid Brethren* are now acting, who, like *dutiful* and *pious* Sons, are taking a Veil, and walking backward, to cover the Nakedness which has been too long exposed to the Jest of scoffing Unbelievers.

As your Letters and Defences breathe a noble *Compassion* to the *straying Souls* of Dissenters; the extraordinary Instance, with which you conclude the whole, ought not to be overlook'd. You are concern'd, it seems, "that I have read, and in several Instances
"agree in Sentiment and Reasoning—with the Author of *the Rights of the Christian Church*; and appear to have much studied and profited by that worthy Author—And are sorry to find dissenting
"Ministers and Gentlemen dealing so much in Books
"of this Sort. So long as this is the Case, what Hope

“ of a Comprehension ! Or, indeed, who would wish
 “ for it ! * ” I have read, Sir, and I hope profited by
the Rights, &c. As you profess to have read, and I
 hope not without Profit, *Bellarmin*, an Author incom-
 parably worse. As for *my Agreement* with THE
 RIGHTS, &c. as far as that Author agrees with *Truth*,
 with *Scripture*, with *Law*, you must give me Leave to
 say (without augmenting, I hope, your Sorrow) that
 I esteem it not the least Reproach. Nay for once, Sir,
 if you please I will make you my Confessor, and frankly
 own, that in many Things I agree in Sentiment and
 Reasoning with one far worse than either *Bellarmin* or
the Rights, &c. Who this may be, you will see,
Luke iv. 41. James ii. 19.

Dissenting Ministers and Gentlemen, I presume,
deal in Books of all Sorts, from whence they can gather
 useful Knowledge, and improve and enlarge their
 Minds. They have dealt in the Writings of the
 shrewdest *Deists* (Books much worse than *the Rights*,
 &c.) as you see by the many noble Defences of *Christi-*
anity which their Pens have produced. Your—*Dealing*
in Books of this Sort—is a Bugbear, Sir, which may
 frighten *Children in Understanding* ; but Dissenters, you
 should have known, *have not so learned* CHRIST. They
 are commanded to *try the Spirits* ; to *examine*, and
prove all Things ; and remember the noble *Bereans*,
 who are commended by St. Paul for *searching* carefully
 into *the Grounds and Evidence of Things* before they
 gave their Assent. And if this *Liberty* of Examination,
 and of speaking and writing freely upon Subjects of
 Religion, be a Bar to a *Comprehension*—very long
 may it remain ! It is the Glory of *Christianity* that it
 shuns not the severest Search : 'Tis *Bigotry* and *Error*
 only that love to hide themselves in Darknels, and grow
 touchy and alarm'd if you seek to bring them into
 open Sight.

We acknowledge, Sir, your Goodness in bringing down to our Understandings the Mystery of CONSECRATIONS of Churches and Church-Yards; and your kind Attempt to illustrate the Usefulness, Edification, and Comeliness of this Ceremony. There are some *previous Questions*, which I could wish to see answered, before we enter thoroughly into the grand Debate—As, whether you think the Apostle *Paul*, in all his apostolic Labours and Travels thro' the Churches, ever consecrated a *Plat of Ground*? Whether any of the *twelve Apostles*, amongst the *Miracles* and *mighty Works* which they every where wrought, ever did this wondrous Thing? Whether the *Synagogues*, where our SAVIOUR preach'd; the *Chamber* where he instituted, and first celebrated his sacred Supper; the *upper Room* where the Apostles met, when they actually received the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost; the *House of Aquila and Priscilla, Nymphas, &c.* in which were *Christian Churches*; had really any *other Consecration* than our *Places of Worship* have? And yet, whether *these* were not as much the *House of GOD*, and *Places of his more immediate Presence*, as any splendid *Cathedral*, now consecrated with all the *Pomp of sacerdotal Device*?

You appeal to “the Forms which Bp. *Andrews* and “*others* have used in their *Consecrations*. And ask—“What think you now? Is there any Thing *ridiculous* or *superstitious* in all this? *” Yes, extremely much of both, if they at all resemble that of A. B. *Laud* (the only one I have ever seen) when he consecrated the Churches of *St. Catherine Cree, St. Giles's*, and others in *London*. An intolerable Piece of *ecclesiastical Foppery*, sufficient to have made a popish *Cardinal* blush, and which no Protestant can read but with indignant Concern! The Form has, in larger Histories, been more than once publish'd; but having never seen it in any little Tract, I shall beg leave to transcribe it, for the Edification of our common Readers. A

* Appendix, Page 45.

striking Instance of the *Danger* of indulging *human Invention* in Things of Religion; and which shews, into what Wilds of ridiculous Superstition even *learned Minds* are apt to run, when they leave the *Simplicity of the Gospel of CHRIST*.

“ The *Bishop* came attended with several of the high Commission, and some Civilians. At his Approach to the West Door of the Church, which was shut and guarded by Halberdeers, some that were appointed for that Purpose, cried with a loud Voice—*Open, open, ye everlasting Doors, that the King of Glory may come in!* Presently the Doors were open’d, and the *Bishop*, with some Doctors and principal Men, entered. As soon as they were within the Place, his *Lordship* fell down upon his Knees; and, with Eyes lifted up, and his Arms spread abroad, said, *This Place is holy, the Ground is holy; In the Name of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, I pronounce it holy.* Then walking up the middle Isle towards the Chancel, he took up some of the Dust, and threw it into the Air several Times. When he approach’d near the Rail of the Communion Table, he bow’d towards it five or six Times; and returning, went round the Church, with his Attendants, in Procession; saying first the hundredth and then the nineteenth *Psalms*, as prescribed in the *Roman Pontifical*. He then read several Collects, in one of which he *prays GOD to accept of that beautiful Building*, and concludes thus—*We CONSECRATE this Church, and separate it unto THEE as HOLY GROUND, not to be profaned any more to common Use.* In another he *prays—That ALL who should hereafter be buried within the Circuit of this HOLY and SACRED Place, may rest in their Sepulchres in Peace, till Christ’s coming to Judgment, and may then rise to eternal Life and Happiness.*”

“ Then the *Bishop*, sitting under a Cloth of State, in the Isle of the Chancel, near the Communion Table, took a written Book in his Hand, and pronounced

" nounced *Curses* upon those who should hereafter pro-
 " phane that *holy Place* by *Musters* of *Soldiers*, or
 " keeping prophane *Law-Courts*, or carrying *Burdens*
 " through it: And at the End of every *Curse*, he
 " bowed to the *EAST*, and said, *Let all the People say*
 " *Amen*. When the *Curses* were ended, which were
 " about twenty, he pronounced a like Number of
 " *Blessings* upon ALL that had any Hand in Framing
 " and Building that *sacred* and beautiful Church; and
 " on those that had given, or should hereafter give,
 " any *Chalices*, *Plate*, *Ornaments*, or other *Utenfils*:
 " And, at the End of every *Blessing*, he bow'd to the
 " *EAST*, and said, *Let all the People say Amen*. After
 " this came the Sermon, then the Sacrament, which
 " the *Bishop* consecrated and administer'd in the fol-
 " lowing Manner.

" As he approach'd the *Altar*, he made five or six
 " low Bows; and coming up to the Side of it, where
 " the *Bread* and *Wine* were cover'd, he bowed *seven*
 " *Times*. Then, after reading many Prayers, he
 " came near the *Bread*; and gently lifting up the Cor-
 " ner of the *Napkin*, beheld it, and immediately let-
 " ting fall the *Napkin*, he retreated hastily a Step or
 " two, and made three low Obeisances. His *Lord-*
 " *ship* then advanced, and having uncovered the *Bread*
 " bowed three Times as before. Then he laid his
 " Hand on the Cup, which was full of *Wine*, with a
 " Cover upon it; which having let go, he step'd back,
 " and bowed three Times towards it; then he came
 " near again, and lifting up the Cover of the Cup,
 " looked into it, and seeing the *Wine*, let fall the Co-
 " ver again, retired back, and bowed as before.
 " Then the Elements were consecrated, and the *Bishop*
 " having first received, gave it to some principal Men
 " in their Surplices, Hoods and Tippetts; after which,
 " many Prayers being said, the Solemnity of the Con-
 " secration ended."

This, Sir, was the *Sense*, and this the *Manner* of
 that celebrated Martyr and Governor of your Church,
 in

in this Business of CONSECRATION. And, what now think you? Was there nothing *ridiculous* or *superstitious* in all this! You seem, indeed, to have not quite so *exalted* an Opinion of this Solemnity as his Lordship; but as *the Church* has no where (that I know) explain'd herself as to this Matter; nor *censured* *Laud's* Conduct; nor prescribed any set Form in which this Ceremony is to be done; any *Bishop*, I apprehend, at present, is at full Liberty to use the same, and may now consecrate a Church after the Manner of *St. Catherine Cree Church*. And pray! to whom shall I attend, as best knowing and expressing the *Church's* Sense in this Point, to the great Archbishop *Laud*; Or, to—*Mr. White* sometime Fellow of *St. John's College, Cambridge*.

I have now done with your *Appendix*——There is another OFFICE of your *Liturgy*, alike liable to the severe Exceptions of all well-instructed *Christians*, and to the Sneers of insulting *Deists*, as any I have yet considered; and that is, your OFFICE for the Ordination of *Priests and Deacons*. This, if you call me forth again, I may more particularly shew. At present, I only ask——Whether to your *sober Reason* it really appears a *fit* Question, to be put to EVERY young Gentleman that comes from the *University* for Orders to the Bishop; *whether he trusts that he is INWARDLY MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST to take upon him this Office?* And for EVERY such young Gentleman to declare solemnly as in GOD's Presence, *that he trusts that he is SO INWARDLY MOVED*. The Gentlemen and their *Communication*; the Manners, the Taste, and State of the *Universities*; you, perhaps, better know, Sir, than I shall pretend. Tell me then, *before God*, is their *moral State* such that you can reasonably think EVERY Student that comes thence, when he gets a Title to a Living and applies for Orders to the Bishop, doth really feel himself *inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost* to make that Application? How is it we are not afraid to *trifle* in an Affair so exceeding serious and important! Is it

†

not

not coming too near the Sin of *Ananias*, *lying to the HOLY GHOST*?

And when, kneeling before the Bishop, he lays his Hand on the Student's Head, is it not a strange saying — *Receive the HOLY GHOST* — *Whose Sins THOU dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose Sins THOU dost retain they are retained; in the Name of the FATHER, of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST. Amen.* I make no Reflections at present: but only say: that to me it appears quite surprising, that, in an Age of such Discernment and Freedom of Enquiry, *this Form* is suffered to stand. And, in the Language of your *Collect*, I very heartily pray — *That Almighty GOD, who alone worketh great Marvels, would send down upon our Bishops and Curates the beauteous Spirit of his Grace, the Spirit of Wisdom and Humility!* assured, that this *Stone of Stumbling*, in the Way of sagacious *Infidels*, will then quickly be removed.

But to conclude. I have the Pleasure, Sir, to be persuaded that your Mind is not *now* filled with those *swelling* and *big* Thoughts of the Excellence of your *Liturgy*, as when our Correspondence open'd. *Dissenters*, you find, are not the only Persons who except strongly against your Forms. Many of your learned *Clergy* have, in a candid and respectful Manner, and yet with a becoming Courage, express'd great Dissatisfaction with them. What *Effect* their Attempt for the Enlargement of the Church's Bounds, and for a further *Reformation* and *Review* will produce: Time alone must shew. Upon the Foot it at present stands, the Church's Situation, to every discerning Person, must appear extremely *critical* and uncertain.

It is *difficult* to defend it against the crafty Attacks of *POPERY* on the one Hand; and, I think, actually *impossible* to support it against the Assaults of *INFIDELITY* on the other. Betwixt these *two Stones*, is there no Room to apprehend its being quickly *ground to Powder*? to the *injurious* Idea which many of your *Forms* give of the *Christian Religion*, the unhappy Increase of *Deism* is, undoubtedly, in great Measure owing.

owing. And increase it further will, there is the highest Reason to believe, if these *Forms* which are the just Offence and Ridicule of *Unbelievers*, are not timely dismiss'd. But when those who now boast themselves the *Successors* of the Apostles, and the only regular *Pastors* and *Ministers* of Christ, shall give Proof that they are possessed of a truly *apostolic* Virtue, and shal no longer seek *their own*, but the *Things* of JESUS CHRIST; a Review will be no distant, nor difficult Event.

In the mean Time, *Dissenters* have the Satisfaction to reflect; that amidst various Discouragements, they have, by their *Dissent*, approved themselves LOYAL to the only SOVEREIGN of the Church, and FAITHFUL to a *sacred Trust* committed to them by GOD, for which they must give Account. They rejoice in the *Review*, that they have entered their Protest against the *Impositions* and *Inventions* of Men; which have corrupted the Simplicity, enervated the Vigour, deform'd the Beauty and broken the Communion of the Body of *Christ*. And whatever rash Censures they may happen to incur from the *prejudic'd*, the *weak*, and the *interested* now: They, with great Assurance hope, to be not only *approved* but *applauded* by their JUDGE; and to receive, at his appearing, *Honour* proportion'd to their present *Reproach*.

When, it shall please the *Almighty Sovereign* to awaken in the *Christian World* a Spirit of *genuine* CHRISTIANITY—When *true* HONOUR shall prevail over *Cowardice* and *Temporising*; and INTEGRITY and TRUTH over *Falshood* and *Error*—When that slavish ignoble Principle, *that we are to conform to the establish'd Worship of the Country where we dwell, whatever it be*, shall be held in deserv'd Reproach; a Principle that debases greatly and corrupts the human Soul; puts out its intellectual Eye; chains up its noblest Powers; robs it of its highest Glory, *viz.* the Searching into *religious* Subjects, and offering to its CREATOR a *reasonable Service*; in short, a Principle that directly tends to banish every Thing that deserves the Name of *Religion*;

ligion; to drive all *Truth*, and *Honour*, and *Honesty*, from amongst Men; that will justify a Man's professing himself a Mahometan at *Constantinople*, a Pagan at *Peking*, a Papist at *Rome*—When this infamous and base *Principle*, I say, shall be treated with just *Contempt*; and Men shall be every where disposed, to seek with *Impartiality*, and to practise without *Disguise* *RIGHTEOUSNESS* and *TRUTH*——Then, Sir, will the Character of a *rational* *DISSENTER* be had in universal Honour. Then will such appear to have been the only *consistent* *Protestants*; the true Patrons of Christian Liberty, Church-Unity, and Catholick Communion; and the only Body of *Christians* upon whom the Guilt of *Schism* does not really rest; because they open their *Communion* to every sincere Christian; and require *no Terms*, but what *CHRIST* and his *Apostles* have required in the Church. If you will not throw in your Lot, and share with them in those Honours; you must e'en take your own Way. However, rest assured that

I am,



With due Affection and Esteem,

SIR,

Yours, &c.

A DISSENTER.

